4th March 1926]

Mr. T. Adinarayana Chettiyar :—" May I ask the hon. Minister whether he was informed or is otherwise aware that the people residing in the Asramam near which place the man was caught red-handed, collected evidence and placed it before the Assistant Commissioner of Excise to prove this transaction ? "

The hon. Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro :—" I repeat, I have no information nor am I aware of it."

Mr. R. Veerian :—" May I know whether the Government are aware that such illicit sales are very common in cocoanut topes where toddy is tapped ? "

The hon. the President :—" Where ? In what part of the Presidency ? "

Mr. R. Veerian :—" I have travelled through several districts, Salem, Coimbatore, North Arcot, South Arcot, Tanjore, Madura, etc."

The hon. the President :—" Pudupalayam in Tiruchengodu is quite enough for us this morning."

Mr. R. Veerian :—" Very well, Sir. Confining my attention to Salem district alone, it is very common in Salem district as there are several cocoanut topes. Now, may I know whether the Government have taken any effective steps to prevent such illicit sales ? "

The hon. Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro :—" Yes, it is very unfortunate and regrettable that a good deal of illicit distillation of arrack and toddy is going on in Salem, Coimbatore and some other places. To stop this kind of thing, a new circle has been formed to strengthen the preventive staff."

Mr. V. C. Vellingiri Gounder :—" May I know whether the report was called for before or after the question was received ? "

The hon. Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro :—" On receipt of the question the report was called for."

Mr. V. C. Vellingiri Gounder :—" That is how the attention of the officers is drawn to such practices."

Mode of search by Abkari officers.

* 1515 *Q.*—Mr. J. A. Saldanha : Will the hon the Minister for Education be pleased to state what action has been taken on the following prayer made by the Committee of the Kanara Indian Christian Civic League to the hon. the Minister during his visit to Mangalore in November last ?—

" That the hon. Minister be pleased to move that an Excise officer, before making a search of a house or open place and before seizing any article, shall call upon two or more respectable inhabitants of the locality in which the place to be searched is situated to attend and witness the search."

A.—The existing law requires that searches by Abkari officers should be made in the presence of witnesses and this in practice is being done. The Government do not therefore propose to take any action in the matter.

[4th March 1926

Mr. A. Chidambara Nadar :—" The answer is : 'The existing law requires that searches by Abkari officers should be made in the presence of witnesses . . .' May I know, Sir, whether these searches are made in the presence of respectable inhabitants as prayed for in the petition ? "

The hon. the President :—" Will the hon. Member kindly repeat the question ? "

Mr. A. Chidambara Nadar :—" This question relates to the hon. the Minister for Education. The answer is that searches are made in the presence of witnesses. But what has been prayed for in the petition is that searches should be made in the presence of two or more respectable inhabitants of the locality. What I want to know is whether the Government require that these searches should be made in the presence of respectable inhabitants of the locality."

The hon. Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro :—" I suppose witnesses called in are always respectable."

Mr. P. Anjaneyulu :—" May I know if these witnesses include also some of the Abkari staff as it sometimes happens ? "

The hon. Rao Bahadur Sir A. P. Patro :—" If that is the personal experience of my hon. Friend, certainly that will be examined."

Mr. J. A. Saldanha :—" I want to know whether there is any presumption that all witnesses are respectable. The presumption as also the practice is otherwise."

The hon. the President :—" That is a matter of opinion, evidently "

Depressed Classes.

Announcement of G.O. No. 2660, L. & M., in Komaralingam village.

* 1516 Q.—Mr. R. Veerian : Will the hon. the Home Member be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government are aware that the depressed classes have no free access to the post office in the agraharam of Komaralingam village, Udamalpet taluk, Coimbatore district, through the agraharam pathway ;

(*b*) whether the G.O. No. 2660, L. & M., dated the 25th September 1924, was announced in the Komaralingam agraharam, Udamalpet taluk, Coimbatore district ; and

(*c*) if the contents of the Government Order were not announced in Komaralingam agraharam, the reason for not announcing the same ?

A.—(*a*) The attention of the hon. Member is invited to the answer given to question No. 611 asked at the meeting of the Legislative Council held on the 29th October 1925.

(*b*) & (*c*) The Government have no reason to think that the Government Order referred to has not been published.

Mr. R. Veerian :—" Sir, here the Government are referring me to question No. 611 in the answer to which I find the following : 'The Local Government have no administrative control over the location of post offices' Now, Sir, the question involved in this is with reference to the depressed